

UNITED STATES

The press is suddenly filled with various advertisements that use images of *moai* to tout their products. An ad in the *Explorers Journal* is particularly notable in that it advertises a classy watch by Breitling, dubbed the "Mata-Rangi Expedition" model, commemorating "the voyage of the largest reed vessel built by modern man." The watch has a logo showing a drawing of the Mata Rangi on its face. However, the ad neglects to mention that the ill-fated Mata Rangi sunk ignominiously shortly after being launched from 'Anakena beach, its crew (and stowaways) being rescued by the *Stray Dog*, a passing sailboat (we are not making this up). For background on the Mata Rangi and its short unhappy life, see RNJ 10(3):63, 11(1):43, 11(2):96, and 11(3):138.

The other advertisements are for Crowne Plaza Hotels and Kinko's. The Crowne Plaza ad features a shot of Ahu Akivi's statues, apparently symbolizing members of a stoned Board of Directors. Kinko's is a computer generated set of four *moai* from Rano Raraku, pushing Kinko's expertise in creating exciting images for presentations.



Marks Hinton of Houston wears his *moai*-festooned Easter Island shirt to locate a *moai* mural painted on a wall in the Montrose section of Houston, Texas.

A random visit to a Cayucos (California) garage sale by our publications assistant, Antoinette Padgett, resulted in a rare find: several truly ugly *moai* representations in the form of vases, salt shakers and, in one case, a candle holder. The liver-lipped candle holder is particularly noteworthy as it has green glass marble eyes that light up when a candle is placed inside.



David Stanley of Pacific guidebook fame, sent us his picture in front of Toronto's upscale (and pricey) travel clothing manufacturer, Tilley's Endurables. The *moai* is a symbol for the company. David, ever the rebel, is wearing Levi's, not Tilley's. Watch for the announcement of David's three updated handbooks: South Pacific, Tahiti-Polynesia, and Fiji Islands—new editions for all three coming out in 1999, published by Moon Travel Handbooks.



WHAT'S NEW IN POLYNESIA

LAHAINA, MAUI

AMID POLYNESIAN CHANTS, the Mayor of Hanga Roa, Petero Edmunds Paoa was welcomed to Lahaina. Edmunds was there to establish "sister-island" ties. Maui leaders hope the association will encourage the growing renaissance of native cultures. Edmunds said he hopes to learn methods of disposal of trash and sewage as used on Maui, and reforestation methods which may benefit Rapa Nui. In return, he has offered to share his people's knowledge of Polynesian culture, which has remained fairly intact. Leaders of the two islands exchanged gifts before the signing of the sister-island agreement. Councilman Sol Kaho'ohalahala led the renewal of the relationship and said there is evidence of a relationship in the oral and spiritual traditions of both islands.

Star Bulletin, 22 May 1998.

HONOLULU, HAWAII

IT HAS BEEN OFFICIALLY ANNOUNCED that the *Hokule'a* will visit Easter Island next year. Polynesian Voyaging Society President Myron Thompson said it will be the most ambitious journey of the *Hokule'a*. They plan to leave Hawaii in June of 1999, arrive to Rapa Nui in October, and return in December. The voyage will be chronicled by *National Geographic*.

Thirty students from Kamehameha schools in Hawaii visited Easter Island. One of the student projects was to help restore the ecosystem. As part of a cultural exchange, the students planted sandalwood and koa saplings. As a result of the Easter Island-Hawaiian interchange, professional exchanges are being discussed between Hawaii's Department of Land and Natural Resources and Rapa Nui's National Park officials.

The students took two computers to the island in order to connect Hanga Roa's school with the internet. All this activity is connected to the voyage of the *Hokule'a*; the *Hokule'a*'s escort ship will carry the phone line system and satellite. That way there will be a three-way system of communication to track the *Hokule'a*.

Honolulu Advertiser, June 28, 1998

ALSO IN HONOLULU is yet another adventurer attempting to prove the diffusionist theory of ancient races. Gene Savoy is off on a seven-year voyage around the world in a replica of an ancient sailing vessel, trying to prove that pre-Columbian Peru had contact with civilizations as far away as Japan and the

Middle East. Leaving from Callao, Peru, in a 73-foot catamaran with dragon-shaped prows, two masts and five sails, he landed in Hawai'i in February after six weeks at sea. Savoy says the boat duplicates those of ancient Chinese trading ships he believes plied the Pacific before the time of Columbus. The ship's design is a combination of Hawaiian, Polynesian, Chinese and Japanese concepts "and is the kind that would have been used in the Pacific basin by various cultures thousands of years ago."

Savoy will stay in Hawai'i to fix the boat and raise money for the next leg of the trip: Japan, China, Southeast Asia, India, Africa, Egypt, and the Mediterranean. His final leg will cross the Atlantic to Mexico and Central America.

Reno Gazette-Journal, 12 February 1998

SUVA, FIJI

THE PACIFIC DRUG, KAVA, is becoming of interest to scientists in Europe for its economic value and use as a pharmaceutical product. It is used as a relaxant in the United States, and a research team at the University of the South Pacific (Suva) has found that kava has cancer-inhibiting properties. But local kava growers in the Pacific receive little benefit from growing kava; middlemen are the main beneficiaries. And now kava plantations have been set up in Australia, Hawai'i and Central America. To counteract this threat, strategies are being developed to provide a high quality product and to set up facilities to process the kava so that its value would be increased.

University of the South Pacific Bulletin, Vol. 31(11) 1998

DR ATHOLL ANDERSON and crew have been excavating in caves on Fiji. They found prehistoric remains including a land crocodile two meters or more long, a megapode (giant bird), giant iguanas and large frogs. Anderson suspects the most recent finds would have been deposited within the past 5000 years. The first human settlement in Fiji was around 3,000 BC. We hope to have a full report on this excavation in a future issue of RNJ.

University of the South Pacific Bulletin, Vol. 31(18) 1998

TONGA

THE GOVERNMENT OF TONGA has imposed a ban on *beche-de-mer* exports for the next ten years. This seafood delicacy is popular in Asia and over-harvesting has led to its decline in much of the Pacific.

Tok Blong Pasifik, Vol. 51 (3-4) 1997

KWAJALEIN

KWAJALEIN ATOLL sits in the middle of the Pacific Ocean and is part of the US Army's space support to the US Space and Strategic Defense Command, NASA, and the Department of Defense. To earn extra cash, the island base is now marketing its skills and services to the world and is open for business. Want to test an intercontinental ballistic missile, missile interceptor, or satellite? They offer beachfront test facilities, package deals, and targets. Sorry, you'll have to leave off the nuclear warhead.

Pacific News Bulletin, Vol. 13(5) May 1998

CHRISTMAS ISLAND (KIRIBATI)

A SATELLITE LAUNCH PROPOSAL is being proposed from international waters, just outside Christmas Island. This US/Russian/Ukraine/Norwegian joint venture is planing to use Russian rockets fired from a modified North Sea oil rig. The rocket will

make it to space; the rest will crash back into the ocean. Each launch will produce 36 tons of carbon monoxide in the lower troposphere on the way up, and a kerosene slick on the ocean, several kilometers wide as some 4.5 tons of kerosene fall unburned on the way down. The launch presentation to the Kiribati government said the fuels are "environmentally friendly." However, when questioned it was amended to "friendlier." The rational is that there are not a lot of higher forms of life in mid-ocean, but questions arose as to possible impact on whales, other marine mammals, fish and birds.

NEW ZEALAND

ACCORDING TO NEW RESEARCH from New Zealand's Victoria University, the ancestors of Polynesians came from Taiwan. *The Dominion*, Wellington's daily newspaper, reports that research by the school of biological sciences reader Geoffrey Chambers confirms earlier genetic studies that show Polynesians (and the Maori in particular) had less genetic diversity than many other ethnic groups. His report concludes that ancestors of the Polynesians came from mainland Asia before island-hopping across the Pacific. Beginning at Taiwan, the route went through the Philippines and Indonesia, east through the upper part of Papua-New Guinea, northeast to Fiji, east to Samoa and finally to the islands of Easter Polynesia.

Dr Chambers stated that there is an exact living record of these voyages of colonization preserved in the DNA of their modern-day descendants who still live along the route. DNA traces indicate that at some point Polynesians may have traveled as far as South America and returned.

OBITUARY

FRANCE

WE HAVE RECEIVED SAD NEWS of the death of André Valenta, founder of the Cercle d'Etudes sur L'Île de Pâques et la Polynésie (C.E.I.P.P.). Valenta, who was born in Tunisia on 12 May 1924, died on 4 July 1998. He lived most of his life in Evry, Essonnes, France. Valenta founded the Institut International de L'Île de Pâques in 1979; this was enlarged geographically the following year to include other parts of Polynesia, thus becoming the Cercle d'Etudes sur L'Île de Pâques et la Polynésie. Valenta remained president until 1993 when Dr Raymond Duranton took over that position.

A dedicated subscription will be opened to honor the memory of André Valenta. For further information, contact C. E.I.P.P. c/o Délégation de la Polynésie Française à Paris, 28 boulevard Saint-Germain, 75005 Paris, France.

WHAT'S NEW ELSEWHERE

ENGLAND

RAPAMUNE is the name of a drug made from a fungal growth found in the soil on Easter Island that helps kidney transplant patients to resist rejection by up to 60%, according to Sir Roy Caine, Nobel prize winner in the field of transplants and the lead investigator for the clinical trials in England. Trials have been confined to kidney patients but researchers hope they will also be successful in other transplants. The side effects associated with the usual treatments do not occur with Rapamune. Expected to be available for general use in about two years, the

drug is derived from a streptomycine fungal growth that evolved over millions of years on Easter Island. Now that a culture can be replicated in a laboratory, it can be produced produced anywhere.

London Times 15 July 1998

BRAZIL

A SKULL FOUND IN SOUTHEASTERN BRAZIL and dubbed "Luzia" is being touted as the oldest ever found in the New World—dated to 11,500 years ago. An anthropologist from Sao Paulo, Walter Neves, claims the skull has characteristics similar to people of the South Pacific. When Luzia's skull was analyzed it closely resembled the Easter Island sample. The conclusion was that for some reason the Luzia paleoindian skull was very similar to the Easter Islanders/South Pacific, but it was *not* postulated that Luzia arrived to South America from the South Pacific, as was reported in the *San Francisco Examiner* for May 23, 1998. (It appears that some comments were misquoted or taken out of context). Anthropologist Vince Stefan, University of New Mexico, will be conducting investigations to see whether the same ancestral population of central Asian people may have been the source for both the paleoindians of the Americas and the Lapita people who are theorized to be the ancestors of the Polynesians. Robert Suggs calls these people Paleo-Caucasoid. [Our thanks to Vince for clarifying a rather confused news report!]

CONTINENTAL CHILE

NEWS FROM THE FONCK MUSEUM, VIÑA DEL MAR

The objections of the Consejo de Monumentos Nacionales were disregarded, and the lovely but aging structure that now houses the Fonck Museum will be torn down and replaced by a modern building. The Fonck Museum has long been noted for its collection of Rapanui artifacts, and as the temporary location for the Biblioteca Mulloy (under the direction of Ana Betty Haoa Rapahango). According to the mayor of Viña del Mar, the Fonck structure is in poor condition from earthquake damage, and is now battling termites and an attic full of pigeons. The Rapa Nui *moai* that stands in front of the Fonck will be moved inside the new building.

El Mercurio de Valparaíso 8 June 1998

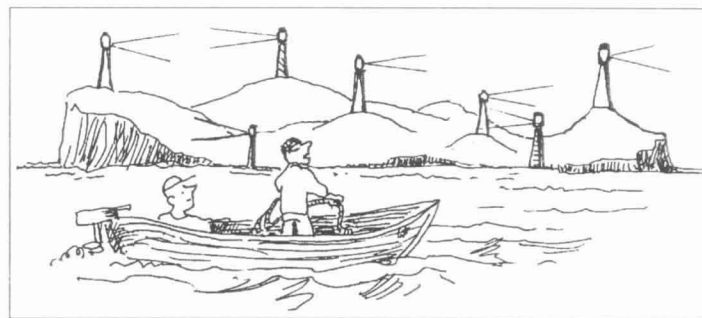
WHAT'S NEW IN HANGA ROA

Editor's Note: For such a small piece of real estate, Rapa Nui engenders a lot of *noticias* in the Chilean press. The following batch of news releases has come across our desk since the March issue. Things are perking on the island. Whether they will prove to be good or bad—or even happen—is unknown. It is discouraging to note that another scheme to erect a lighthouse on the island is again in the news. And there is a push to clarify the problems of land ownership, and another to have an autonomous 'region' for the island, separate from that of Valparaíso. Stay tuned! RNJ will try to keep abreast of all these changes, charges and countercharges, infighting, plots and counter-plots. As they say, The Plot Thickens!

NEW LIGHTHOUSE PROPOSED FOR RAPA NUI

JUST WHEN YOU THOUGHT IT WAS SAFE to go out again, the Chilean Navy is again proposing to put up a new lighthouse, this time on the summit of Maunga O'Tu'u, at approximately 250 meters above sea level. In 1991, a proposal to erect a "monumental lighthouse" at Vai a Tare, near the sacred site of 'Orongo, was defeated by protests from Rapanui islanders who marched in protest (see RNJ 6(3):66-67; and 5(4):76-77).

Despite the fact that the island already has seven coastal beacons around the island, it is stated that this new project is in response to "worried island fishermen." The project is expected to benefit 30 local fishermen. [It would be cheaper and just as effective to buy those "worried fishermen" Global Positioning Systems!]



The island used to be famous for its statues.

The new lighthouse will consist of an 8 meter (26 foot, or about 2.5 story) tower on the summit of Maunga O'Tu'u. It is situated at the V formed by a fork in the roads leading to Anakena and to Ahu Akivi, and about a mile inland from both roads. It is almost exactly due south of Maunga Terevaka. It will have its own generator, solar panels, and a Racon apparatus to give its position when a navigation radar is pointed at it. Its design, it is said, will not constitute a "discordant element" with the surroundings. The plan has been approved by the Consejo de Monumentos Nacionales and the island's Provincial Government which has asked for an area 10 by 10 meters on the summit of said mountain.

TEN DAYS LATER, the following appeared in *El Mercurio de Santiago*: "Because of eventual environmental damage, Islanders are opposed to the lighthouse and the pier." The article quoted the directors of the Consejo de Ancianos #2 as being categorically opposed to the construction of a lighthouse. The Consejo directors, among them Ruth Pakomio, Matías Riroroko and Antonio Tepano, declared that "... lighthouses have never solved the problems of fishermen stranded at night; because if they are stranded, it is because they ran out of gasoline."

The Consejo de Ancianos #2 assured that the lighthouses now located at Vaihu, Hotu Iti, Hanga Roa Otai, Hanga Otai, Hanga Piko and at La Pérouse are more than sufficient. Antonio Tepano stated that "This will no longer be known as Easter Island, but the Island of the Lighthouses." In his opinion "... the proposed lighthouse will be useful only for all the outsider fishing industries that come here to drag their nets on the bottom of our ocean. Off the continent, drag netting has affected all the ecosystems of the coast, leaving the local fishermen with nothing for their nets."

OPPOSITION TO NEW PIER ON EASTER ISLAND

THE PROJECT of the *Dirección de Obras Portuarios* (port works) to construct a pier at La Pérouse Bay has come under fire from several directions. This ill-advised scheme would include a pier 70 meters long, placed some 16 km from the village of Hanga Roa. According to Governor Jacobo Hey, the idea has been almost unanimously rejected by local residents, mainly for the destruction it would cause to archaeological sites in that area. Others rejecting the idea include the heads of both Consejos de Ancianos, Alberto Hotus and Mario Tuki; the group Kahu Kahu O'Hera whose aim is to preserve the cultural patrimony of the island; and the head of CONAF, José Miguel Ramírez.

The most conservative group on the island, that of the Consejo de Ancianos #2, says that the island does not need a new pier owing to the impact that results in unloading a thousand or more tourists at one time from a passenger ship. Last summer none of the 300 passengers on the ship *Switzerland* could get ashore, one of several reasons for a new pier. Antonio Tepano of the Consejo #2 said that, as a scuba diver, he has seen layers of toilet paper several centimeters thick on the ocean floor after the departure of the petroleum tankers that fill the petroleum refinery on the island.

The Chilean Armada has not expressed an official position but claims there is an "urgent need" for such a port. But a pier at La Pérouse could only receive ships up to 1000 tons, thus could not be used by the supply ships or many of the naval ships that travel periodically to the island.

Now ships have to be unloaded by small boats, which is difficult when the seas are rough and it takes 2 to 10 days to unload, depending on conditions. Some islanders as well as naval officials lean towards a pier in the bay of Papa Haoa near Hanga Piko and Hanga Roa, closer to the population center. But the Director of Ports stated it would cost 50 million dollars to put a pier there, as compared to 4 million at La Pérouse. The difference is because it would be necessary to build an 800 meter long breakwater at Papa Haoa, a feature not needed at La Pérouse because of the natural conditions.

El Mercurio de Valparaíso, 8 July 1998

THE PIER WAS AGAIN IN THE NEWS on the 29th of July when Matías Riroroko, a member of the Consejo de Ancianos #2, stated that: "We are not going to let them put in a single post in that place." In the judgement of the Consejo, the warehouses, storage places, necessary machinery and everything else a port needs will create irreversible damage and contamination to La Pérouse Bay and the waters of Rapa Nui. He added: "We are not going to be converted into the back porch of the country" and pointed out that the project will diminish the income of the island because tourists come to the island to observe the cultural and archaeological patrimony.

Editor's Note: Not mentioned in the news reports is the fact the archaeological sites at Hanga Piko/Papa Haoa have long since been trashed by development, thus no pristine sites would be affected by construction there. Already there is a cement loading dock, crane and various support structures, warehouses, etc. To replicate these at La Pérouse bay would create an enormous eyesore and destroy numerous priceless archaeological sites...and still be on the opposite side of the island from the village. To build

a port in order to accommodate cruise ship passengers hardly warrants the destruction. Cruise ship passengers are not the type of tourists that benefit the island's economy: they are unloaded and bussed around the island for a few hours and then are whisked back to the ship. They do not stay at local hotels, eat at local restaurants, or have time to shop for souvenirs. But they place undue stress the archaeological sites, for some 500-800 passengers and crew visit—in a matter of a few hours—the key sites on the island: Rano Raraku, 'Anakena, and fragile 'Orongo.

"THE PRICE OF BEING CHILEAN"

THE FOLLOWING ITEM titled appeared in *El Mercurio de Santiago*, written by Carolina Abell and Angela Precht. The subtitle states: "Because of excessive paternalism, bureaucracy, and inefficiency in the preservation of the ethnic-cultural roots of this distant territory, Easter Island's culture could be extinguished."

The authors seemingly interviewed a few islanders and continentals living on the island and added a bit of personal observation. They began by stating that islanders and continentals are different: islanders are "colored caramel by the embracing sun"; the 'contis,' are not; islanders are "tall and sinuous, strong, and clear eyed; continentals are not" [*these ladies must have had a close encounter with some of the island's hunks*]. But, according to the authors, both islanders and foreign experts agree that the island lives in a paradox: by protecting it, the island has become "paralyzed." So said well-respected scientists like Sergio Rapu, Claudio Cristino, and Edmundo Edwards.

Islanders are not rich, but they are not poor either. For 75 year old Juan Haoa, who carved two important figures in the church and is the father of eleven children, "everything comes from the earth." Islanders live on temporary work—assisting archaeologists, working in tourism, etc. These jobs are unstable and poorly paid, like those who fish, cultivate the soil and carve figures. One young Chilean woman from the mainland, Soledad Armengoli, decided 3 years ago to live on the island, and she believes that islanders are happy "just subsisting." Soledad, who has no money, learned how to fish and to cultivate, and claims she needs nothing more.

The island's priest, Padre Joao, notes that everyone on the island is related but from different clans and only Rapanui can own land—not even those of mixed blood born off the island. Chileans, like international tourists, are referred to as "foreigners." Few relationships are legalized by marriage and there are many single teen-age mothers, but the children are not abandoned. And Soledad added that if an islander reaches 21 without having had children, they are looked upon as sterile, and that is the "worst." Padre Joao says that islanders are very religious in the rituals and the church itself is a very sacred place for them. When the TV series *Iorana* filmed some of the action in the church, they were very angry.

The Padre added that the Government gives the people of the island a great deal. However, it is in a paternalistic way, forgetting that if they give the islanders many things, they will appreciate them less. He has the impression that the 'Law Pascuense' has done more harm than good.

With a hint of sadness, the Padre stated that many visitors come to the island searching for "lecherous activities"—activities from which none seem to escape, not even some authorities." The virtues of the land and the people should be enjoyed

by visitors, but there also are vices. Homosexuals? Yes. Transvestites? Yes. Prostitution? Also. There exist two cases of AIDS although only one is recognized by the medical authorities. Leprosy has been controlled and there is no malnutrition. But what about the robberies? With reluctance he recognized that these acts are multiplying, and Soledad added that "many bad characters have arrived on the island—professional thieves from the conti because they have learned that such crimes are not penalized greatly due to the 'Law Pascuense' [for more about the *Ley Pascua*, see *RNJ* 12(2):53].

Soledad added that prisoners are let free on weekends to dance and have fun at the disco, thus punishment has little value and there is alcoholism and drug addiction, the latter from plantations of marijuana: both are a part of that amorality that the continentals come seeking. Padre Joao added that it would be helpful to have a private secondary school, perhaps a religious school, to teach not just formal education but also life principles.

Islanders who were interviewed said that private investment should be permitted in all areas including health, economy, tourism, etc., and contis should be allowed to acquire a house, in the same way an islander can have a house on the mainland. The socialist councilor Cristino added that "There are people who have housing subsidies but don't really need them."

Islander Bene Tuki is worried about pollution. NASA reported that the waters around the island are the purest in the world, but the little beaches receive discarded rubbish daily—bottles, broken glass, plastic—but the worst are the dumping places and the burned oil used to keep down the dust: "We are throwing garbage on our own land. I worry that our water supply will be contaminated. It is necessary to make a careful study of the land use."

The Rapanui language also is endangered; it is not used much by the children even though it is taught in the island school that has more than 800 children. The language is not yet lost, but in reality children play and speak in Spanish. All agree with anthropologists that the culture and language are in danger of disappearing.

On the other hand, continentals who have lived on the island for several decades claim that the Law Pascuense is unjust because it permits any islander to study in a university without passing the College Board Exams, and that privilege is not guaranteed to any other minority in Chile.

El Mercurio de Santiago, 10 May 1998

MEDICAL TEAM

CHILEANS, AMERICANS, French, Swedish, Chinese and British diplomats were recently brought to Rapa Nui as a part of the annual medical and cultural operation administrated by the Chilean Air Force. Doctors and technicians of the Chilean Air Force plus a team of ophthalmologists from the United States Air Force came to solve some of the medical problems of islanders. Chilean Air Force General Fernando Rojas added that it is a good way to further train doctors, nurses and hospital personnel and, "in case of war, they must be capable of carrying out their medical work in any kind of condition."

This medical program has been done elsewhere—in the Antarctic, the Campo de Hielo (an isolated region in the south of Chile), and now on Easter Island. In just 3½ days of work,

doctors provided free medical attention to island residents in areas of pediatrics, general surgery, breast cancer diagnosis, urology, plastic and infant surgery, dermatology, ophthalmology, internal medicine, nutrition and gynecology. All work was done in the hospital on Hanga Roa. They brought some first-class equipment and supplies "in order to assure success." In contrast to other years, on this occasion a team of USAF doctors, a group that assists countries with scarce resources, were included. They gave eye examinations, treated glaucoma, performed surgery, and donated eyeglasses. They also provided UV-block sun glasses. Some of the surgery was to correct eyes that would not close because of the stopping of tear flow (a result of leprosy). When they departed on the Air Force Boeing 707, they were festooned with shell necklaces from grateful patients. The medical project cost the US Government about US\$ 15,000.

El Mercurio de Santiago, 10 May 1998

AN INTERVIEW WITH THE ISLAND'S HOSPITAL DIRECTOR

FOR TWO AND A HALF YEARS Dr David Gutierrez Tanabe has been the director of the Hospital Clinic of Hanga Roa. In a recent interview he said that contact with westerners is having a negative effect of the health of the islanders. They have become more sedentary, eat more fats and more highly refined products, and these things are changing their physical profile. What has not changed is the isolation of the island.

Gutierrez claims isolation is a psychological factor. Islanders do not have equal access to medical treatment as they do on the continent: if someone has a skull fracture, he must take the airplane to the continent. This leads to feelings of abandonment in matters of health. The problem will not be solved by policy or by increasing resources; rather it is necessary to provide health education, and change eating habits. The hospital is organizing workshops to prevent serious accidents, AIDS, alcoholism and drug addiction.

To overcome the problems of isolation the hospital now uses 'tele-medicine', sending digitized images by satellite to the INDISA Clinic in Santiago where a specialist sends back information by internet. The island hospital provides the same level of care as is found in any rural area of Chile, but because of the isolation they have more equipment to help with emergencies. When asked about AIDS on the island, Gutierrez claimed there is one carrier and he continually requests condoms. When pressed about other cases, Gutierrez insisted there is only one. As for leprosy, he stated that there are no active (contagious) cases but there are more than 20 islanders with the effects of this disease; they are not contagious as the virus is under control.

Although the recent medical project provided specialists, some patients in need of care did not come to the hospital to be operated on. However, many problems were taken care of. When asked if it should be the Ministry of Health rather than the Air Force that carries out this kind of medical operation, Gutierrez replied that they both are part of the same government, and it is the "government that provides."

El Mercurio de Santiago, 10 May 1998

THE NEWS IN HANGA ROA

EASTER ISLAND HAS NO REGULAR NEWSPAPER on the island, but we recently noted that a Gazette, *Te Rapa Nui* is being advertised on the Easter Island web page. Check it out; there is a

place to enter a subscription. They plan to publish three issues a year. Although the English is fairly 'free-form,' most items are in Castellano also. Up to last year, there were three local radio stations but all have ended transmission. Admiral Schnaidt Parker announced that the Chilean Navy is studying the possibility of again putting into operation their own radio station, Radio Vaikava.

El Mercurio de Valparaíso 7 July 1998

UNESCO DONATION

THE DIRECCION DE BIBLIOTECAS, Archivos y Museos (DBAM) will receive a half million dollars for conservation and restoration projects on Easter Island. A series of initiatives are about to commence thanks to the International Fund of Cultural Patrimony. After extensive investigations and examination of data, the government of Japan delivered a donation of US\$ 490,000 to UNESCO which will be used to finance two years' work for CONAF (National Parks of Chile), DBAM, the University of Chile (Instituto de Estudios de Isla de Pascua) and local authorities. All are under the direction of the Consejo de Monumentos Nacionales and are aimed to recuperate the cultural patrimony of Rapa Nui.

Other national monuments could receive funds from the same program, and will be considered by the Ministry of Foreign Relations. According to the Executive Secretary of the Consejo de Monumentos Nacionales, Angel Cabeza, private monuments will not be considered.

El Mercurio de Santiago, 8 June 1998

THE ISLAND POLICE

THE SUB-PREFECT FOR VALPARAÍSO, Lt. Col. Patricio Aguayo, interviewed Rapa Nui authorities, and acknowledged the work by the *carabineros*, noting that the presence of police on the island has a "salutary effect." There are now fewer detentions for drunkenness and less drinking in the streets. Up until last year, these infractions had authorities worried.

Aguayo added that Easter Island has a "problematic special police force" in that their work is fundamentally an educational and preventative one. At this time, there is one man being held for rape in the island jail and four others must return every night to the jail. "The conditions in the jail are not the best in terms of comfort; for that reason we are working to get funds to improve the quality of life for the prisoners." Aguayo praised the work of the Hogar de Menores (Juvenile Home) where 22 now receive "integral attention" and another 22 attend the center during the day. The most common crime on the island is robbery, with 15 cases last year; the next most prevalent is intra-family violence. Last year, 13 were held for drinking in the public streets and 58 for drunkenness. Traffic accidents totaled fifteen.

El Mercurio de Valparaíso, 2 June 1998

OWNERSHIP OF LAND

Editor's Note: The issue of land on a small island usually is a thorny one, and Rapa Nui is no exception. Islanders want to be in control of their island; Chile wants to have the final word--and there is also the question of national pride; outsiders long to get a piece of the action; and those from outside (including continental Chile) who have married ethnic Rapanui want to have land, or to inherit it from their spouses. The following items taken from Chilean newspapers (*El Mercurio de Valparaíso* and *El Mer-*

curio de Santiago) reflect some of the controversy. We regret that this material may not be absolutely clear, but often the news reports themselves are contradictory. What we *think* they are saying is reported below.

THE HOME SUB-SECRETARY, Sergio Vergara Larrain, declared that conflicts on Easter Island should be resolved by the Rapanui themselves, and the government should not be the arbitrator. He added that he understands the Rapanui community as an ethnic one, with common interests, and the government should view it as such. He also said that in May, some 360 parcels of land, each of 5 hectares (about 10 acres), will be distributed to island families. This will make a total of 1500 hectares that have been made available, in accordance with the promise made by President Frei when he was on the island.

CHRISTIAN DEMOCRAT Senator Juan Hamilton and a commission gave a report concerning the law that relates to the owning of land on Easter Island by ethnic Rapanui. According to Hamilton, the attitude of various senators of the right (including Augusto Pinochet and Jorge Martínez Busch, the recently retired Chief Admiral of the Navy), reflects a lack of confidence in the islanders. The commission's motion was rejected by one vote.

Among the commission's proposals, one would permit an islander or non-Rapanui spouse to have the right of succession to land. Also, the President of the Republic would be able to reserve land for tourist activities, parks, and sports—among others—and would prohibit the transfer, confiscation, exchange, or taxing of property in favor of persons outside the above-mentioned community.

The opposition senators (Pinochet et al.) argued that the national sovereignty is questioned and it is an attack against the constitutional guarantees of the right to property. Hamilton's opinion is that these statements are inappropriate and reflect a lack of confidence in the Rapanui. He noted that of the 16,600 hectares on the island, only 1,500 are in the power of the islanders. The rest is government owned or national park.

The following day, *El Mercurio* printed a letter by Senator Antonio Horvath Kiss, leveling a blast at Hamilton and the Government for mishandling Chile's current land problems, and adding that giving the islanders rights to their land is unconstitutional. He noted that the treaty signed by Policarpo Toro and "chiefs of Easter Island" in 1888 "gave to the government of the Republic of Chile for always and without reserve the full and complete sovereignty of the island . . ." He ended by saying that the Rapanui are neither being left out nor are they "picturesque hippie types" but are extremely intelligent and prepared. "Its governor is a professor and lawyer, its mayor is an administrator of companies, the president of the Consejo de Ancianos is an ex-marine, and the previous governor was a professor of archaeology in the USA."

El Mercurio de Valparaíso, 14-20 June 1998

SHORTLY AFTER, it was announced that the government of Chile will send to Congress a "suppressive veto" in response to the modification of the Indigenous Law for Easter Island that restricts the access, use and administration of the land on the island only to ethnic Rapanui.

The special initiative for Easter Island proposed to exclude

those who share only cultural traits or customs with ethnic Rapanui from access to the lands available for native islanders. To circumvent the absolute majority needed to approve a new law, the senators and the island authorities proposed to create and send a "suppressive veto" that would allow the Executive Branch to eliminate the part of the bill that dispenses with the norms regulating land in the Indigenous Law. Hamilton added that he hoped the new motion would be approved before President Frei travels to Easter Island in September to celebrate the 110th anniversary of the incorporation of Easter Island into Chile.

The representatives of the island strongly criticized the actions of the senators. Alberto Hotus stated that their position is incongruent with the historic agreements made in 1888.

El Mercurio de Valparaíso, 3 July 1998:

SIX DAYS LATER, headlines in *El Mercurio de Valparaíso* read: "Easter Islanders want their own region, independent from the V Region." The newspaper stated that islanders are upset by the Senate's rejection of the reform to the Indigenous Law and they will ask President Frei to make the island an independent region (Chile is divided into Regions, like states but with colorful names like First, Second, Third . . . Easter Island is now a part of the Fifth Region or, in Spanish, *Quinta Región*, with central offices in Valparaíso).

It is stated that islanders are in an "atmosphere of tension" owing to the rejection by the Senate of the government project that would modify the Indigenous Law defining who belongs to the Rapanui Race and ownership of land. Both Governor Hey and Mayor Edmunds indicated their disappointment.

The Indigenous Law reserves the land ownership to ethnic Rapanui, but definitions are confusing and they permit continentals married to Rapanui to acquire land. The Directors of Consejo #2, who continually raise questions about the authorities on the continent, said that they were not informed.

Sergio Rapu, Matías Riroroko, Rafael Rapu and Ruth Pakomio, directors and members of Consejo #2 announced that they will formally ask President Frei to create an autonomous region separate from the V Region. They denounced the constant pressure from the State to squash initiatives of the islanders in relation to commerce and agriculture and added that the State competes unequally. As for land ownership, government land should be passed in concession to the Rapanui (3000 of the 6000 hectares in the Vaitea farm under SASIPA), and that is the only way of avoiding a future sale to third parties and to assure the continuity of possession by Rapanui descendents.

They disagree with the delivery of individual land titles of 200 plots (half hectares each) that Frei will make in September to some natives, first because it is a concession of land; second because most of these plots have valuable archaeological sites; and lastly, because the plots are not on very useful land and won't serve as pasture.

They noted that the Rapanui dislike politics, quotas and other such machinations. The island work force is more than a thousand persons, but over 400 of these are continentals working in some thirty services or divisions. Many of the wives of these functionaries compete with the Rapanui for jobs, thus providing their husbands with cheap credit on the continent, something that the Rapanui cannot do because of their ethnic status.

et al. News and Notes

According to the directors of Consejo #2, public functionaries have the best paying jobs. They ask that authorities converse with the islanders instead of being accusative, and do it without resorting to politics. Governor Hey lamented that the project to modify the Indigenous Law was rejected by one vote. He said that the amendment would have established definitely that land ownership is only for Rapanui.

El Mercurio de Valparaíso 9 July 1998

ISLANDERS SEEK VAITEA FARM LAND

MARIO TUKI AND RAUL TEAO, president and secretary of the Consejo de Ancianos #2, declared opposition to the upcoming delivery of land titles and asked for a suspension of the ceremony to be headed by President Frei on September 11. At the same time they asked to be given the Vaitea farm of 6000 hectares, the best farmland on the island. "We reject the delivery of 1500 hectares of hills, eucalyptus forests and archaeological zones as a mockery of the needs of the Rapanui people and as an attack against our cultural and natural patrimony," they said. They added that Vaitea was destined to be used for community use (grazing) according to the terms of the Agreement of the Senate in August 1994. The idea is to continue passing over to ethnic Rapanui the land necessary for their development, but always reserving in the name of the State a percentage to maintain the Rapa Nui Park, and for promotion of the products of the Vaitea Farm.

In place of the September ceremony, they requested "true participation to expose the reality of the island, with historic and technical criteria to put together a coherent and easily manageable program that would permit the development of the Rapanui people and the conservation of this Patrimony of Humanity."

El Mercurio de Santiago, 12 July 1998

AS FOR THE ABOVE DECLARATION of the Consejo de Ancianos #2, Mayor Petero Edmunds opposed that position, saying that the land delivery is the result of many years of effort by a commission which includes two members of the Consejo. Edmunds recalled that 10% of the island is controlled by Rapanui, and the remaining 90% by the State. In his opinion all the island should belong to the islanders. He said that it was necessary to accept—for now—the delivery of 1,500 hectares "and not make absurd declarations at the last moment that would do no good." He added that he, as a Rapanui, defends the position that the island continues to be Chilean ". . . because I respect what my ancestor, the king Atamu Tekena, did when he delivered the sovereignty [to Chile]. But at the same time, I ask that my government also respect the accord of 1888 in that the Rapanui lands are for, by, and of the Rapanui people."

In regard to the land under the administration of SASIPA, ". . . the Rapanui should participate and make a profit from these lands." He added that the lands under the administration of the National Parks of Chile should be co-administered ". . . because that patrimony belongs to the Rapanui." In his opinion, the directors of the Consejo de Ancianos #2 are wrong and are creating a conflict over nothing: "They are my relatives and friends, and I understand their feelings, but this is the only government that has wanted to resolve our ancestral problems."

El Mercurio de Santiago, 12 July 1998

THE HOTU MATUA

The new supply ship, formerly belonging to the Chilean Navy, has been re-dubbed "Hotu Matua" and will begin regular voyages from Valparaíso to the Juan Fernández Islands, and then to Easter Island. The Valparaíso Maritime Transport Miramar has made regular supply voyages to Easter Island since last August with a subsidy from the V Region. The contract provides US\$56,000 for each voyage if the company maintains a fixed price of US\$135 per cubic meter. The other supply ship, *Araki*, was scheduled for a September trip, but financial problems have arisen. The crew is unpaid, the company evicted from its offices, and the ship's certificate of navigability expired. When attempts were made to have it renewed, the *Araki* failed to qualify.

El Mercurio de Valparaíso 7 July 1998

TOROMIRO WILL BE REPLANTED

SPECIALISTS AT THE NATIONAL BOTANICAL GARDEN of Viña del Mar and Easter Island are working on a project to replant *toromiro* trees on the island. The last island *toromiro* disappeared around 1960. The five-year project will be presented next November at a competition for funds of the European Union for US\$600,000, and it will be presented in the Fifth World Congress of Conservation of Botanic Gardens to refine details. Last year twelve *toromiro* were brought to the island, and so far all are in good condition. In the coming years, CONAF hopes to plant at least three hectares (six acres) of this legendary tree on the island.

El Mercurio de Valparaíso 7 July 1998

PALM TREE CONTROVERSY

A CHILEAN AIR FORCE PLANE brought 400 Chilean wine palm trees (*Jubaea chilensis*) to the island, and the four largest (16 feet) were planted at a new botanic garden at Vaitea. The smaller shoots will be distributed around the island. The Chilean wine palm is the closest relative to the now-extinct palm that used to be prevalent on the island. Many islanders—including the Mayor—were outraged, claiming that no one was informed about the project, and the land where the "ethnic botanical garden" is being created has the best soil on the island and should be used instead for agriculture. The Mayor added, "We have cattle grazing among the *ahu* and archaeological sites because there is no other land for grazing . . . and now they made this botanical project."

El Mercurio de Santiago 7 July 1998

BAD NEWS

AS WE GO TO PRESS, word has been received from the island that discarded oil and petrol from SASIPA's diesel generators is being dumped in a basin, close to the water well used for the town of Hanga Roa.

REVIEWS

Childress, D. H. *Ancient Tonga & the Lost City of Mu'a. Including Samoa, Fiji, and Rarotonga* (1996); *Ancient Micronesia & the Lost City of Nan Madol Including Ponape, Kosrae, Guam and Yap*. Adventures Unlimited Press (1998).

Review by Georgia Lee

These two recently published books by David Childress join his other efforts, "*Ancient Tahiti & the Lost City of Havaiki, Including the Marquesas & the Tuamotu Islands*," "*Ancient Rapa Nui & the Lost Land of Hiva. Including Easter Island, Pitcairn, & the Austral Islands*," "*Megalithic New Zealand & the Kaimanawa Wall, Including the Chatham Islands*," and "*Lost Cities of Ancient Lemuria & the Pacific*."

David Childress describes himself as a "rogue adventurer and maverick archaeologist" and he makes much of early 19th century references written by a variety of authors who, when they wrote those books, were unaware of scientific knowledge that is now available. Thus we hear a lot about ancient Egyptians in the Pacific, visitors from Outer Space, sunken continents, and so on.

Readers of Childress' books will find just enough factual information from good solid sources to give (for an instant) some credibility, but then—*voilà!*—spurious comments from really weird and/or outdated sources are added and mixed into a murky stew. The results can be fairly hilarious, but this technique of writing is very misleading for the less astute reader who may miss some of the tricky footwork and buy the Brooklyn Bridge.

Let's take a peek at *Ancient Micronesia & the Lost City of Nan Madol*. After describing a bit about Nan Madol, Childress asks a few rhetorical questions: "Were the first inhabitants . . . priests who used their ancient knowledge taken from India and Egypt to build the amazing seaport of Nan Madol?" "Was Pohnpei a remote Pacific base for an ancient navy that was occasionally visited by airships from distant airfield? It boggles the imagination! [*Here we agree with Childress, completely*]. Then he goes on to discuss Egyptian explorations in the Pacific around 1000 BC, and some Greek sailors are tossed in, ". . . remnants of Alexander the Great's army in Persia . . ." The chapter is concluded with a picture of an Egyptian glyph of the sun god Ra.

Can it get worse? Oh yesss. The final chapter is titled "The Mystery of the Settlement of the Pacific." And here we are treated to nutcases such as Barry Fell who advocated Libyans and Phoenicians in the Pacific as well as those pesky Egyptians.

At this point, Childress states, "Though many historians are reluctant to accept the theory of Egyptians in the Pacific, the evidence is overwhelming . . ."

Other books published by Adventures Unlimited include "*UFOs and Anti-Gravity*"; "*Extraterrestrial Archaeology*"; "*The Anti-Gravity Handbook*" "*Underground Bases & Tunnels; What is the Government Trying to Hide?*," and "*Ether Technology*."